

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of preparing a synthetic fuel from coal comprising applying to the coal an aqueous emulsion of one or more reactive polymers and thoroughly mixing the coal to yield a complete
5 reaction of the coal with the reactive polymers, wherein the reactive polymers are selected from the group consisting of ethylene/vinyl acetate copolymers, ethylene/vinyl alcohol copolymers, poly(acrylic acid), poly(vinyl alcohol), vinyl alcohol/vinyl acetate copolymers, poly(vinyl acetate), vinyl acetate/acrylic acid copolymers, poly(vinyl acetate/acrylic acid/ethylene), acrylic acid/acrylamide copolymers and poly(acrylamide).

10 2. The method of claim 1 wherein the aqueous emulsion comprises an aqueous emulsion of vinyl acetate/ethylene copolymer.

15 3. The method of claim 1 wherein the aqueous emulsion further comprises one or more diluents.

4. The method of claim 3 wherein the diluents are selected from the group consisting of water, alcohols, ketones and carboxylic acids and esters.

20 5. The method of claim 4 wherein the diluent is water.

6. The method of claim 4 wherein the diluent is alcohol.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the alcohol is selected from the group consisting of ethylene glycol, diethylene glycol, propylene glycol and glycerine.

25 8. The method of claim 6 wherein the alcohol is diethylene glycol.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the coal is selected from the group consisting of fine coal from stockpiles, fine coal from impoundments, run of mine coal unwashed and run of mine coal washed.

5 10. A synthetic fuel prepared according to the method of claim 1.